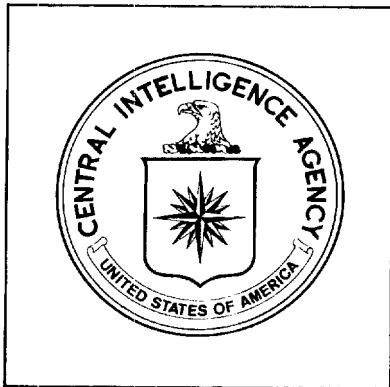


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MIDDLE EAST – AFRICA – SOUTH ASIA

This publication is prepared for regional specialists in the Washington community by the Middle East - Africa Division, Office of Current Intelligence, with occasional contributions from other offices within the Directorate of Intelligence. Comments and queries are welcome. They should be directed to the authors of the individual articles.

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India-Iraq

Mrs. Gandhi's Visit

Prime Minister Gandhi is scheduled to visit Iraq from January 18 to 21. The trip reflects India's desire to maintain its longstanding relationship with Iraq, even though New Delhi is currently more interested in the economic and political benefits accruing from closer ties with Iran.

Baghdad reportedly had been pressing Mrs. Gandhi to accept a four-year old invitation, and her acceptance suggests she was assured the trip will be worthwhile in economic terms. In 1974, Iraq provided India with about 17 percent of its oil imports on a deferred payment basis, but terms for this year's oil supplies reportedly are still unresolved.

India's relations with Iraq are influenced by a number of factors. Both countries have friendship treaties with Moscow and are dependent on the Soviets for sophisticated arms. Indian military advisers help train Iraqis in the use of Soviet military equipment, and New Delhi would like to expand sales of compatible spare parts and other military supplies it produces in increasing volume.

Despite close ties to Iraq, New Delhi seems to place a higher value on its warming relations with Iran. Last year, Iran provided India with 60 percent of its oil imports. The Iranians also recently have proved more generous than Iraq in following through on long term trade and other economic proposals aimed at helping India pay its oil debt. In light of improving relations, spurred by an exchange of visits last year by Mrs. Gandhi and the Shah, New Delhi sees less need to count on Iraq as a counterweight to Iran's support of Pakistan.

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The Indians are working hard and with some success to strengthen their position in the Persian Gulf, although Pakistan still has greater influence in the area. New Delhi's decision last week to permit the Palestine Liberation Organization to open an office in the Indian capital is consistent with India's traditional pro-Arab stance. (CONFIDENTIAL)

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Pakistan - Law of the Sea

May Extend Maritime Jurisdiction

The Pakistani government is discussing whether to extend by presidential proclamation its maritime jurisdiction, prior to the Geneva Conference on Law-of-the-Sea scheduled to convene in mid-March. Some of Prime Minister Bhutto's advisers are urging him to issue a decree that would:

- Declare Pakistan's entire continental shelf--which exceeds 200 nautical miles--to be an exclusive economic zone.
- Delineate Pakistan's maritime zone from those of India, Oman, and presumably Iran.
- Possibly declare a 50-mile territorial limit.

Pakistan extended its territorial sea by presidential decree in 1966 from the traditional 3 nautical mile limit to 12 miles. Officials in Islamabad say they are justified in establishing new claims because other countries are making similar moves without waiting for a multilateral convention on law-of-the-sea. Pakistan's move to extend its territorial jurisdiction was apparently prompted in part by Indian-sponsored off-shore oil exploration which may be encroaching on Pakistani contested waters. Such action by Pakistan could complicate the proceedings at the coming conference.

Looking forward to Geneva, the Pakistani official primarily responsible for law-of-the-sea matters is pessimistic over prospects at the conference for agreement on an international law-of-the-sea convention. Following the end of the Caracas conference last August, he reported to his government that the delegations were ready to enter serious negotiations at the next session. He now apparently believes there are a number of major obstacles to agreement. These include:

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-- Wide differences over what limitations may be placed on a nation's off-shore economic zones.

-- Lack of consensus on the right of free passage through straits.

-- Lack of agreement on access to the sea for landlocked countries.

The latter issue appears to be particularly thorny, and Pakistani officials say it could wreck the unity of the "group of 77," a group of Third World countries which have a virtual automatic majority among the conference delegations. The recent meeting in Kampala showed a sharp split among the delegations on the right-of-access issue. Pakistan has been a leading opponent of the right-of-access for landlocked countries primarily because of its strained relations with Afghanistan which must seek access to the sea through Pakistani territory. Islamabad appears to be modifying its stand on the issue, however, to keep it from becoming a divisive factor among the 77 and a threat to harmony at the Geneva Conference.

The Afro-Asian countries plan to meet in Tehran on January 26 to consider, among other questions, the right of access for landlocked countries. The Pakistanis also expect representatives of the 77 to meet again before March to try to work out a common negotiating position for the Geneva conference.

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